

CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
4 December 1985

SCHOLARSHIP •

Middle East Scholars Approve Resolutions on Funds from Intelligence Establishment

NEW ORLEANS

Members of the Middle East Studies Association in resolutions they passed at their annual meeting here last week, re-emphasized their concern over accepting money from the U.S. intelligence establishment for scholarly activities.

One of the resolutions criticized Nadav Safran, director of Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, for failing to disclose in advance that a Central Intelligence Agency grant of \$45,700 had helped cover the costs of a recent conference on Islamic fundamentalism.

The resolution "deplores" Mr. Safran's violation of a MESA resolution of three years ago, which called on its members to disclose "all sources of support—other than personal—for [their] research."

The members here also "re-affirmed" the 1982 resolution.

In a second action, MESA members "resolved that the association calls upon university-based international studies programs to refrain from responding to requests for research contract pro-

posals from the Defense Academic Research Support Program or from other intelligence entities."

The program is sponsored by the Defense Intelligence College of the Department of Defense. Last spring, in the latest episode in a long-simmering controversy over intelligence-agency financing for scholarly research, the college issued a call for applications from academic and other groups interested in cooperating on "an agenda of research efforts" on Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia.

Scholars Asked Not to Apply

Last year, the Association of African Studies Programs and the executive council of the Latin American Studies Association, together with the directors of 19 area-studies centers, circulated a letter asking scholars not to apply to the support program.

Members of MESA said at the meeting here that they were concerned that scholars would compromise their reputations and access to sources abroad if they par-

ticipated in defense and intelligence-agency research programs. They also said they were afraid such programs would result in the government's setting research priorities in area studies.

The resolution they passed supported the "creation by Congressional mandate of an independent, multi-agency foundation, similar in structure to the National Science Foundation, for the sponsorship, review, and funding of foreign area research."

"We understand and sympathize with your concerns, and support efforts to create such a foundation," Robert O. Slater, program manager for area and language studies at the Defense Intelligence College, said during the MESA meeting here.

The MESA members also asked their ethics committee to consider whether the association should call on individual scholars—not just on university programs—to decline funds for research from the C.I.A. or any other intelligence-gathering agency. The ethics committee is to report on the matter at next year's annual meeting.

—KAREN J. WINKLER